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How Fair My Lady is!

BY CARYL FLORIO.

(Set to music as a part-song by the author, and sung in the concerts of the New York Glee and Madrigal Singers.)

How fair my lady is!
All nature worships her fair face;
It is not I alone
That love to gaze upon her;
But where she walks in matchless grace
The birds in varied tone
Sing out to do her honor.
The sunlight glints through forest trees,
In hopes to gain from her bright eyes
Some piercing ray which he may use
When rain clouds next obscure the skies.

How fair my lady is!
And when at night she walks abroad
The night-moths hurry near,
And flutter all around her;
They think some star hath lost her road,
And wandered from her sphere,
And they on earth have found her.
The flowers open dewy eyes
And stare in mute surprise, to see
The world grown bright ere break of day,
And wonder what this sun may be.

Ah, fair my lady is!
Where'er she goes my heart goes too:
'Tis bound in magic chains,
And must perfuse pursue her;
And though stiff pride my bonds undo—
While absence dulls my pains—
I'm lost when next I view her.
I hate the birds that chaunt her praise,
The sun that dares to seek her eye,
The moths, the flowers that haunt her ways,—
For they can gaze when I'm not nigh.

All nature worships her fair face:—
It is not I alone
That love to gaze upon her.
How fair my lady is!

The Poetic Basis of Music.

BY JOSEPH BENNETT

(From the London Musical Times.)

My purpose now is to take up one of Wagner's underlying principles and see what it is worth.

First of all, the principle chosen must be fairly and accurately described. In doing this, that there may be no doubt either of fairness or accuracy, I shall use the language of Wagner himself, and that of his champion in this country, Dr. Franz Hüffer, whose recently published book, *The Music of the Future*, is an authority not to be questioned. In an appendix to Dr. Hüffer's work, the author, referring to a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at Bayreuth, observes:—

"The choice of Beethoven's Symphony in D minor was the most appropriate that could be made on this occasion, because it forms, as it were, the foundation of the great development of modern German, and especially of Wagner's own, music. The principle of this new phase in art . . . is the necessity of a poetical basis of music; that is to say, a latent impulse of passionate inspiration which guides the composer's hand, and the conditions of which are in themselves by far superior to the demands of music in its independent existence. The rules arising out of these demands are in the Ninth Symphony violated, nay, completely overthrown, with a freedom of purpose and grandeur of conception that can be explained only from Beethoven's fundamental idea, as it rises to self-consciousness, in the words of Schiller's Ode, 'An die Freude.'

Speaking of the Finale to Beethoven's Symphony, Dr. Hüffer goes on to say:—

"It is the highest effort of dramatic characterization instrumental music has ever made, and seeing that it has reached the limits of its own proper power, it has to call the sister art of worded poetry to its aid. . . . It is obvious how the introduction in this way of words, as the necessary complement of musical expression, even at its climax of perfection, became the stepping stone to the further development of poetical music, as we discern it in what is generally called the 'music of the future.'"

Here we have, clearly and boldly stated, the following theses:—

1. *Music must arise from a poetic impulse, the conditions of which are superior to the demands of music in its independent state.*

2. *Instrumental music, even at its climax of perfection, is incapable of the highest expression of that impulse, and needs the aid of words.*

Having gone to Dr. Hüffer for more concise definitions than could be found in the involved periods of his master, I now turn to Wagner himself for their exposition, and find all I want in a single chapter of his *Opera and Drama*—a chapter which, adopting the writer's own term, might be headed "Beethoven's Mistake." I propose quietly to accept this term, and allow Wagner to point out the "immeasurably rich master's" error. After noticing the development of instrumental music from the simple forms of the dance tune and ballad air, Wagner goes on to say that "the expression of a perfectly decided, clearly intelligible individual purport, was, in truth, impossible for a language capable only of expressing a sensation generally," and that this fact was exposed by Beethoven, in whom "the yearning to express such a purport became the consuming, glowing, vital impulse of all artistic creation."

It will here be observed that with regard to Beethoven personally, Wagner begs an important part of the question; but, without stopping to do more now than indicate the fact, I proceed with his argument.

From the moment the great master's "yearning" was manifested, instrumental music became an artistic error, within the mazes of which Beethoven remained entangled. But from the darkness of error came the light of truth, just as the effort of Columbus to reach the Indies by sailing westward led to the discovery of America. "The inexhaustible power of music is, nowadays, disclosed to us by the very great mistake made by Beethoven. Through his undaunted and most bold endeavors to attain what was artistically impossible, we have gained a proof of the boundless capability of music to perform every possible task, when it is only necessary for it to be completely and simply what it really is—an art of expression. From the 'moment' that Beethoven's "yearning" after definite expression "grew to greater and greater strength"—a somewhat indefinite moment—"from that moment" continues our author, "began the great, painful period of suffering of the deeply moved man and necessarily erroneous artist, who, in the strong convulsions of the painfully delirious stammering of an enthusiasm such as that of a Pythoness, produced, as a matter of course, the effect of a genial madman upon the curious spectator, who did not understand him simply because the inspired master could not render himself intelligible to him." To this Wagner adds:—"Most of Beethoven's works of this period (his latest) must be regarded as an involuntary (the italics are mine) attempt to form for him-

self a language for his yearnings, about the subject (the italics are Wagner's) of which, indeed, the master had made up his mind, though not about its intelligible arrangement." Further on, we read of "enigmatical magic drawings, in which the master had simultaneously diffused light and horror, in order that he might, through them, publish the secret that he could never utter in music, but which, however, he fancied he could utter in music alone." This was "Beethoven's mistake," and the foregoing is Wagner's description of it.

I have thus allowed the master, Wagner, and the disciple Hüffer, to state their case, from which logically, and therefore naturally, come certain inferences, making part of the case itself. Those inferences now demand attention; and, in the first place—

If instrumental music, in presence of Beethoven's "yearnings," became an artistic error, it is much more so, because without excuse, now that he has discovered (in his last symphony) music's highest form and expression.

This inference is proudly accepted by Wagner and his followers. The master speaks of Beethoven's "D minor" as the "last symphony ever written," and Dr. Hüffer avows that with its appearance the arts of music and poetry "became inseparable," while "the possibility of music for the sole sake of sonorous beauty virtually ceased to exist." It follows, as a matter of course, that symphony writers since Beethoven are not "necessarily erroneous," as was he, but sin in the full light of truth; and against all such Wagner, who consistently never attempted to write a symphony himself, uses his keenest rhetorical weapons. First, he attacks those who imitate principally what is external and strange in Beethoven's style. Of these he observes, that not knowing the "unspoken secret" of the master, it was necessary to find some substantial subject for their music. He continues—"The pretence of the musical description of a subject borrowed from nature or human life was placed as a programme in the hands of the auditor, and it was left to the power of his imagination to interpret, in accordance with the hint once given, all the musical eccentricities which could be let loose, with unshackled caprice, until they degenerated into the most motley, chaotic confusion." German composers, Wagner goes on to say, have made themselves less absurd. They have incorporated the new style with the old, and thus formed an artificial medley, "in which they might for a long period continue to musicize very decently and respectfully, without having to fear any great interruptions from drastic individualities. If Beethoven mostly produces upon us the effect of a man who has something to tell us, which, however, he cannot communicate clearly, his modern followers, on the other hand, resemble men who inform us in an irritatingly circumstantial manner that they have nothing to tell us." Thus does Wagner in a few words dismiss Mendelssohn, Spohr, Schumann, and all post-Beethoven participants in the "artistic error." A second inference from the Wagnerian theses is a correlative of the first:—

The art of music is, in itself, incomplete, and needs to be perfected by an alliance with poetry.

In his exposition of this doctrine Wagner has used the parabolic form after fashion which makes it somewhat difficult for me to follow him in a paper meant for general reading. Here, however, is a brief and significant passage:—"Music is a Woman. The nature of woman is love, but this love is the love that receives, and, in receiving, gives itself up with-

out reserve. A woman does not obtain perfect individuality until the moment that she gives herself up. She is the water-nymph who speeds through the waves of her native element without a soul until she obtains one through the love of a man." Previously he had said that Beethoven vainly tried to make music fertile by exercising it in parturition," and was at last compelled to supply the "fecundating seed" which he took from the procreative power of the poet. I am concerned to inquire neither into Wagner's theory respecting woman nor the accuracy of his parallel. Enough that what has been quoted will convey a strong and clear idea of the views he holds concerning the independence, or rather the dependence of music as an art.

Having thus thrown upon Wagner's position, with regard to the "poetic basis" of music, as much light as his own words can give, it remains to see what can be urged on the other side. Here let me say, that, in reply, I shall eschew invective, which, as Mr. Disraeli once said, when it told against him, is not argument. Invective, consequent upon Wagner's unfortunate leaning towards its use, has long disfigured this musical controversy, and given rise to an *odium* almost as virulent as that which springs from theological discussion. But, while avoiding sarcasm and abuse, I am prepared to do more,—I will not inquire whether Wagner, as we know him, is the result of his own theory, or whether the theory has been adapted to Wagner. In like manner, I will waive the question how far, when exalting the alliance of music and poetry as the only real musical organization, Wagner is moved by personal vanity, or, at least, by a natural tendency to magnify his own special vocation. In brief, the man shall be separated from his theory, as ought always to be the case when theory is weighed in the balance.

Looking generally at the matter in dispute, it is impossible not to be struck with the part Beethoven plays in it. Of course, if the Wagnerian principles be true, they must have existed before that great master, and independently of him; but none the less do we find Beethoven held up as the Messiah of a new musical dispensation wherein Wagner takes the rôle of St. Paul. Wagner has built his theory upon Beethoven; and it may, therefore, be worth while to see whether, between the foundation and the superstructure, there exists a real and natural connection. Here, then, we touch a vital part of the subject. The question stands thus:—Did Beethoven, in the latter part of his career, strive "involuntarily" to make instrumental music a definite means of expression? Are his latter works examples of a "mistake" which he rectified only when worded poetry was united to music in the Finale of the Choral Symphony? I answer that in putting forth such a doctrine Wagner has acted upon assumption merely. He seems to be conscious of the fact, and takes measures to place himself beyond the reach of refuting evidence. Mark, for example, how he insists upon the word "involuntary" in connection with Beethoven's efforts; how he compares his utterances to those of a Pythoness, and defines him as a "genial madman." All this shows considerable skill, because, if Beethoven be regarded as a unconscious and irresponsible medium,—Dr. Hüffer accepts as true of all creative musicians what Vogl said of Schubert, that they compose in a state of *clairvoyance*—then, of course, any theory can be built upon the man's doings without reference to the man himself. But will my readers accept this surmise? I trow not. They will insist, with me, in looking upon Beethoven as a conscious and responsible worker, who knew what he did, and why he did it. Wagner would keep Beethoven out of the witness-box, under what is sometimes euphemistically termed "friendly restraint." I call him into court and ask that he may be allowed to influence the verdict. Under these circumstances it appears rather

damaging to Wagner's theory that Beethoven having found the right still pursued the wrong. If, before the Ninth Symphony, the master was struggling to give expression to his thoughts, and if, in the Ninth Symphony, he found the means of doing so, how comes it that, after the Ninth Symphony, he went back to his artistic error, made more "enigmatical magic drawings," and more "sketches about the subject of which he had not made up his mind" in the shape of the so-called "posthumous quartets?" This was not the act of a man conscious that he had found the light and liberty of perfect expression, established the inseparableness of music and poetry, and proved that the existence of instrumental music, "for the sole sake of sonorous beauty" was no longer possible. In good sooth, Wagner has excellent reasons for keeping the master in a state of irresponsibility. Furthermore, by those who reject that irresponsibility as an unwarranted assumption, it must be thought strange that Beethoven left no record of his struggles and of his victory. Here was a man who, having great and definite things to say, labored for years with an indefinite means of expression, and kept absolute silence about his disappointments. Here, moreover, was a man who, after sore efforts, made a great and glorious discovery, and said nothing about it. Strange, indeed, is this; and from it I can only draw one inference—that the fabric which Wagner has built upon the latter part of Beethoven's artistic career, is neither more nor less than the creation of a man resolved to bolster up a preconceived theory. How much is this inference strengthened when we note that Wagner says not a word about the Choral Fantasy, which appeared as early as 1811, and in which voices are united to the solo instrument and orchestra, just as in the Choral Symphony. Here, let me quote a passage from a letter of Beethoven's, addressed to the publisher, Probst:—"I must now, alas! speak of myself, and say that this, the greatest work I have ever written, is well worth 1,000 florins c. m. It is a new grand Symphony, with a finale and voice parts introduced, solo and choruses, the words being those of Schiller's immortal 'Ode to Joy,' in the style of my pianoforte Choral Fantasy, only of much greater breadth." Note, here, the almost complete parallelism which the master saw between the two works. But Wagner says nothing about the Fantasy, because to do so would tend to upset his theory. That work was not preceded by "yearnings," "sketches" and all the rest of it. Yet, if ever Beethoven ceased to be a "necessarily erroneous artist," it was in 1811, not in 1824.

Let me not be understood to have said anything in depreciation of the Choral Symphony. My contention simply is, that Wagner has taken the plan of a particular work and treated it as an outcome of general principles, which were never in the composer's mind.

Dismissing thus the Beethoven phase of the question, I now come to the question as a whole, and have to meet the proposition stated by Dr. Hüffer, that the arts of music and poetry are inseparable, and that "the possibility of music for the sole sake of sonorous beauty has ceased to exist." In another place, it is true, Dr. Hüffer admits that the highest type of musical development "does not make impossible or irrational the perpetuation and perfection of a lower and simpler species as such," but, herein, he confessedly differs from Wagner, and, as the disciple is not above his master, I shall take the proposition in its unqualified form. Is it true, then, that instrumental music is a defective organization—that it is the soulless Woman, who cannot be complete till she find the Man? In answering this question, I may surely appeal to the universal instinct, which ought never to be overlooked when discussing matters of universal application. "Instinct," said Sir John Falstaff, "is a great matter," and it must have an important effect upon this controversy, according as we find its weight thrown upon one side or

the other. Can we, then, discover anywhere the existence of a feeling that instrumental music is an incomplete and, consequently, unsatisfactory thing within its own province? An affirmative reply to this may be challenged as regards every form of instrumental music, from the wild notes of the Alpine herdsman to the C minor symphony of Beethoven. Nowhere do we find the evidence of such a feeling, which, if it ever had a universal existence, would speedily remove the cause of offence. Above all, would the unfinished organization of instrumental music have made itself obvious to those with whom the art generally has been a constant study and delight. But it is just these who find the highest forms of instrumental music satisfying. Where is the amateur who detects incompleteness in the first three movements of the Choral Symphony? When listening to them, has he the impression of looking upon a half finished temple, or upon—if Wagner's theory about the female sex be right—a woman who has never loved? Is he conscious of an abhorrent vacuum, and does he thrill with satisfaction when the voices enter to fill it up? Direct and plain questions like these, undarkened by grandiloquent verbiage, excite a smile, but none the less do they comprise the Wagnerian theory. The answer to them must be easy. Every amateur knows that he is free from such a consciousness; that the purely orchestral movements are complete in themselves, and that, when vocal music is added, he recognizes no more than a temporary alliance of powers which may exist apart. I confess to a high estimate of the argument derivable from the general sense of completeness with which instrumental music is received, but it is not at all necessary to my present purpose. A refutation of Wagner's doctrine may be found in the very nature of music itself; and here we come at length to the pith of the whole question.

Dr. Hüffer, in the book already named, after drawing largely upon the philosophy of Schopenhauer to support his views, remarks on the other hand:—"Schopenhauer seems to have considered music as an art of entirely independent and self-sufficient means of expression, the free movement of which could only suffer from a too close alliance with worded poetry. He even goes to the length of highly commanding Rossini's way of proceeding, in which the words of the text are treated quite *en bagatelle*, and in which, therefore, music speaks its own language so purely and distinctly that it does not require the words at all, and has its full effect even if performed by instruments alone." This dictum of his favorite philosopher Wagner rejects, and Dr. Hüffer says that it "cannot but surprise us." But as regards the independence and self-sufficiency of music, it exactly defines the position I mean here to assume. To look upon music as an indefinite expression, needing alliance with that which is definite, is to do it gross injustice. It is an expression truly, just as the colors in a painting are the expression of the artist's subject, but it is also a suggestion. For the truth of this Wagner himself shall be a witness. In his remarks on the Choral Symphony, he substantially says that the work represents (I quote Dr. Hüffer) "the struggle of the human heart for happiness. In the first movement this longing for joy is opposed and overshadowed by the black wings of despondency. . . . The second movement, on the other hand, with its quick and striking rhythmical formation, describes that wild mirth of despair which seeks respite and repose in the waves of physical enjoyment. The trio again may be considered as a dramatic rendering of the village scene in 'Faust.' The Adagio, with its sweet pure harmonies, appears after this like a dim recollection of former happiness and innocence. . . ." Considering that Wagner regards music alone as barren, and only capable of being "exercised in parturition" without bringing forth, it is astonishing what the purely orchestral movements of the Symphony con-

vey to him. In this description he "unconsciously" indicates the true grandeur, independence, and self-sufficiency of the unaided art. Its strength and glory lie in the very qualities which he elsewhere speaks of as its weakness and shame. To make it the mere expression of worded poetry is to harness Pegasus; for the genius of music is never so noble and attractive as when free in its own domain. Carlyle hints at this when he speaks of music as "a kind of *inarticulate unfathomable speech*, which leads us to the edge of the infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that." Make it the accompaniment of articulate, comprehensible speech, and you limit its powers. There is no question of gazing into the infinite then; the bounds which confine it are narrow and visible. But leave music free to range the world of sound, and it brings back infinite and infinitely varied treasures. How thankful ought we to be for what Wagner calls an "artistic error!" To it we owe the intellectual wealth of Bach, the gaiety and humor of Haydn, the tenderness, and grace of Mozart, the sublimity and pathos of Beethoven, the refined beauty of Mendelssohn, the artless song of Schubert, and the fervent, soul-revealing poetry of Schumann. If these things be the results of "artistic error," let us cling to error, and reject the truth. At any rate, let us not proclaim the doom of music as a separate art at the bidding of one who, having a mission, seeks to magnify its importance, and who, being at the head of a movement, would make the little sphere in which he works comprise the whole world.

In Weimar with Liszt.

FROM A YOUNG LADY'S LETTERS HOME.

(From the Atlantic Monthly.)

(Concluded.)

Weimar, August 23, 1873.

Liszt has returned from his trip, and this week is the first time that I have been able to play to him without being nervous, and that my fingers have felt warm and natural. It has been a fearful ordeal, truly, to play there, for not only was Liszt himself present, but such a crowd of artists, all ready to pick flaws in your playing, and to say, "She hasn't got much talent." I really begin to feel at last as if I had a little, but you have no idea how difficult it is to play *anything* perfectly! I am so glad that I stayed until Liszt's return, for now the rush is over, and he has much more time for those of us who are left, and plays a great deal more himself. Yesterday he played us a study of Paganini's, arranged by himself, and also his *Campanella*. I longed for—, for she is so fond of the Campanella, Liszt gave it with a velvety softness, clearness, brilliancy, and pearliness of touch, that was inimitable. And oh, his grace! *Nobody* can compare with him! Everybody else sounds heavy beside him. However, I have felt some comfort in knowing that it is not Liszt's genius alone that makes him such a player. He has gone through such technical studies as no one else has except Tausig, perhaps. He plays everything under the sun in the way of *Etuden*. Has played them, I mean. On Tuesday I got him to talking about the composers who were the fashion when he was a young fellow, in Paris,—Kalkbrenner, Herz, etc.,—and I asked him if he could not play us something by Kalkbrenner. "Oh yes, I must have a few things of Kalkbrenner's in my head still," and then he played a concerto. Afterward he went on to speak of Herz, and said, "I'll play you a little study of Herz's that is infamously hard. It is a stupid little theme, and then he played the theme, "but *now* pay attention." Then he played the study itself. It was a most ridiculous thing, where the hands kept crossing continually with great rapidity, and striking notes in the most difficult positions. It made us all laugh; and Liszt hit the notes every time, though it was disgustingly hard, and as he said himself, he "used to get all in a heat over it." He had evidently studied it so well that he could never forget it. He went on to speak of Moscheles and of his compositions. He said that when between thirty and forty years of age, Moscheles played superbly, but as he grew older he became too old-womanish and set in his ways,—and then he took off Moscheles, and played Etuden in his style. It was very funny. But it

showed how Liszt has studied *everything*, and the universality of his knowledge, for he knows Tausig's and Rubinstein's studies as well as Kalkbrenner and Herz. There cannot be many persons in the world who keep up with the whole range of musical literature as he does. Liszt loved Tausig like his own child, and is always delighted when we play anything arranged by him. His death was an awful blow to Liszt, for he used to say, "That will be the inheritor of my playing." I suppose he thought he would live again in him, for he always says, "Never did such talent come under my hands." I would give anything to have seen them together, for Tausig was a wonderfully bright and captivating little fellow, and I can imagine he must have fascinated Liszt. They say he was the naughtiest boy that ever was heard of, and caused Liszt no end of trouble and vexation; but he however forgave him, and after the vexation was past Liszt would pat him on the head and say, "Karlichen, entweder wirst du ein grosser Lump, oder ein grosser Meister." * That is Liszt all over. He is so indulgent that in consideration of talent he will forgive everything.

Weimar, September 9, 1873.

This week has been one of great excitement in Weimar, on account of the wedding of the son of the Grand Duke. All sorts of things have been going on, and the Emperor and Empress came on from Berlin. There have been a great many rehearsals at the theatre, of different things that were played, and of course Liszt took a prominent part in the arrangement of the music. He directed the Ninth Symphony, and played twice himself with orchestral accompaniment. One of the pieces he played was Weber's *Polonaise* in E major and the other was one of his own *Rhapsodies Hongroises*. Of these I was at the rehearsal. When he came out on the stage the applause was tremendous, and enough in itself to excite and electrify one. I was enchanted to have an opportunity of hearing Liszt as a concert player. The director of the orchestra here is a beautiful pianist and composer himself, as well as a splendid conductor, but it was easy to see that he had to get all his wits together to follow Liszt, who gave full rein to his imagination, and let the *tempo* fluctuate as he felt inclined. As for Liszt, he scarcely looked at the keys, and it was astonishing to see his hands go rushing down the piano and perform passages of the utmost rapidity and difficulty, while his head was turned all the while towards the orchestra, and he kept up a running fire of remarks with them continually. "You violins, strike in sharp here." "You trumpets, not too loud there," etc. He did everything with the most immense aplomb, and without seeming to pay any attention to his hands, which moved of themselves. He never did the same thing twice alike. If it was a scale the first time, he would make it in double or broken thirds the second, and so on, constantly surprising you with some new turn. While you were admiring the long roll of the wave, a sudden spray would be dashed over you, and make you catch your breath! No, never was there such a player! The nervous intensity of his touch takes right hold of you. When he had finished, everybody clapped their hands like mad, and the orchestra kept up such a *fanfare* of applause, that the din was quite overpowering. Liszt smiled and bowed, and walked off the stage indifferently, not giving himself the trouble to come back, and presently he quietly sat down in the parquette, and the rehearsal proceeded.

Weimar, September 24, 1873.

We had our last lesson from Liszt a few days ago, and he leaves Weimar next week. He was so hurried with engagements the last two times that he was not able to give us much attention. I played Rubinstein's *Concerto*. He accompanied me himself on a second piano. We were there about six o'clock p. m. Liszt was out, but he had left word that if we came we were to wait. About seven he came in, and the lamps were lit. He was in an awful humor, and I never saw him so out of spirits. "How is it with our Concerto?" said he to me, for he had told me the time before to send for the second piano accompaniment, and he would play it with me. I told him that unfortunately there existed no second piano part. "Then child, you've fallen on your head, if you don't know that at least you must have a second copy of the Concerto!" I told him I knew it by heart. "Oh!" said he in a mollified tone. So he took my copy, and played the orchestra part which is indicated above the piano part, and I played without notes. I felt in-

* You'll turn out either a great blockhead or a great master.

spired, for the piano I was at was a magnificent grand that Steinway presented to Liszt only the other day. Liszt was seated at another grand facing me, and the room was dimly illuminated by one or two lamps. A few artists were sitting about in the shadow. It was at the twilight hour, "l'heure du mystère" as the poetic G. used to say, and in short, the occasion was perfect, and couldn't happen so again. You see we always have our lessons in the afternoon, and it was a mere chance that it was so late this time. Well, I felt as if I were in an electric state. I had studied the piece so much that I felt perfectly sure of it, and then with Liszt's splendid accompaniment, and his beautiful face to look over to,—it was enough to bring out everything there was in one. If he had only been himself I should have had nothing more to desire, but he was in one of his bitter, sarcastic moods. However, I went thundering on to the end—like a cataract plunging into darkness, I might say—for it was the end, too, of my lessons with Liszt!

Berlin, October 19, 1873.

Coming back from dear little Weimar, this Berlin seems to me like a great roaring wilderness, and all the houses appear to have grown. There is an immense number of new ones going up on all sides, and the noise, and the crowd, and the confusion are enough to set one crazy, after the idyllic life I've been leading all summer. Liszt was kindness itself when the time came to say good-by, but I could scarcely get out a word, nor could I even thank him for all he had done for me. I did not wish to break down and make a scene, as I felt I should if I tried to say anything. So I fear he thought me rather ungrateful and matter-of-course, for he couldn't know that I was feeling an excess of emotion which kept me silent. I miss going to him impressively, and although I heard my favorite Joachim last night, even he paled before Liszt. He is on the violin what Liszt is on the piano, and is the only artist worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with him. But Liszt, in addition to his marvelous playing, has this fascinating and imposing personality, whereas Joachim looks like any heavy German. Liszt's face is all a play of feature, a glow of fancy, a blaze of imagination, whereas Joachim is absorbed in his violin, and his face has only an expression of fine discrimination and of intense solicitude to produce his artistic effects. Liszt is a complete actor who intends to carry away the public, who never forgets that he is before it, and who behaves accordingly. Joachim is totally oblivious of it. Liszt subdues the people to him by the very way he walks on to the stage. He gives his proud head a toss, throws an electric look out of his eagle eye, and seats himself with an air as much as to say, "Now I am going to do just what I please with you, and you are nothing but puppets subject to my will." He said to us in the class one day: "When you come out on the stage, look as if you didn't care a rap for the audience, and as if you knew more than any of them. That's the way I used to do.—Didn't that make the critics mad though?" he added with an ineffable look of malicious mischief. So you see his principle, and that was precisely the way he did at the rehearsal in the theatre at Weimar that I wrote you about, and I don't doubt that he assumed the same absolute despotic air when he played at the court concert before the emperor in the evening. Joachim, on the contrary, is the quiet gentleman-artist. He advances in the most unpretentious way, but as he adjusts his violin he looks at the audience with the calm air of a musical monarch, as much as to say, "I repose wholly on my art, and I've no need of any 'ways and manners.'" In reality I admire Joachim's principle the most, but there is something indescribably bewitching about Liszt's willfulness. You feel at once that he is a great genius, and that you are nothing but his puppet, and somehow one takes a base delight in the humiliation! The two men are intensely interesting, each in his own way, but they are extremes.

Heigh-ho! *Es war eben zu schön*,—the artist-life we led all summer with Liszt. To young artists he is a great illuminating, emancipating, life-giving Force, like the Sun,—and to us all, leaving him is like passing from sunlight into shadow indeed.

4 F.

Mr. Horsley's "Comus" and other works.
(From the New York Tribune, April 17.)

Mr. Charles Edward Horsley, the conductor of the Church Music Association, gave his concert last night at Steinway Hall, before a very good audience and with the most flattering results. The

programme consisted entirely of his own compositions, interpreted by the Church Music Association and an orchestra of 40 to 50 pieces, and, though the performance was somewhat imperfect, we cannot but be thankful to the ladies and gentlemen who gave us an opportunity of becoming acquainted with music of such decided merit. The principal part of the evening was devoted to Mr. Horsley's cantata of "Comus," composed to an abridgment of Milton's masque. It is not only a work of ripe and sound scholarship, but it is also a work of great freshness and beauty. It will satisfy the scientific musician, and it will charm all persons of taste and refined feeling. It is graceful in style, cheerful in spirit, and pleasantly varied; and though we can trace in it the influence of older musicians—and notably of Mendelssohn under whom Mr. Horsley studied—it is a truly original work, not a copy of other men's ideas. The cantata opens with a vigorous overture in the bright open key of C major, following which is a short prelude leading by an ingenious modulation into a chorus in the key of F. The second part of the chorus, "Yet some there be that by due steps aspire," with its charming violin accompaniment, is one of the happiest passages in the work. The chorus ends with a repetition of the prelude in part, and an effective tenor solo is taken up immediately in the related key of D minor. A striking Bacchic chorus succeeds in the same key, the use of the minor scale in connection with the hilarious and emphatic measure giving to the number a singularly uncanny but appropriate character. An excellent bass song for Comus introduces the chorus of the mystic crew, in the second part of which is another delightful conceit, an allegro movement, with pizzicato accompaniment on the words,

"Come knit hands, and beat the ground,
In a light fantastic round."

This was encored, and it well deserved the compliment. "The Measure" which follows is an interlude for the orchestra in minuet time—a fascinating dance movement which could only have been written by a devout student of J. S. Bach. The principal theme recurs and is interrupted several times, and at each *réprise* is taken faster than before. The introduction of *The Lady* is prefaced by a beautiful little "Symphony," a sort of romanza for the strings with reed accompaniment, an andante con moto in A major; and the soprano then has an elaborate scene, with the "Echo Song," a little gem of melody enriched by an accompaniment of singular delicacy and airy fancy, and differing widely from most echo songs in being entirely free from clap-trap. Of the subsequent numbers we marked for special praise the duet between *The Lady* and *Comus*; the song of the *Attendant Spirit*, "Sabrina fair," an allegretto grazioso in common time, wherein a curious and very agreeable effect is produced by throwing the musical accent on the second beat of the measure; the song for *Sabrina*, and the last song for the *Attendant Spirit*. The solo parts were taken by Mrs. Gulager, Mr. Leggat, Mr. Remmertz, and a young lady who replaced Miss Antonia Henne, and whose name was not given.

The second part of the programme consisted of an excellent overture from Mr. Horsley's cantata, "Enterpe;" a Madrigal, "Sing Lullaby;" and a short selection from "The Bridal," a wedding cantata dedicated to Miss Nellie Grant and Mr. Sartoris.

(From the *Graphic*.)

An extra concert of the Church Music Association was given at Steinway Hall last night. The occasion was complimentary to Mr. Charles E. Horsley, the conductor of the association, and several of his works were performed before an audience composed rather of musicians and those immediately interested in the art than members of the fashionable world. The first part of the programme was devoted to the recital of Mr. Horsley's cantata of "Comus," and it was found that the music with which he had clothed Milton's poem was distinguished by graceful melodies and well-balanced instrumentation. The preponderance of recitative detracts considerably from the excellent effect wrought by other portions of the work, but the spirit of the poem is worked out with broad comprehension and delicate, intuitive power, if not with stirring originality. "The Measure" (orchestral dance) is quaint and graceful, and the symphony which follows almost immediately was most effectively sustained by the violins, the unity of the bowing being admirable. An echo song, "Sweet Echo," is delicate in gradation, and the prayerful

invocation which concludes the succeeding recitative reminds one in shape, if not in melody, of the prayer in "Der Freischütz." The song for tenor, "Sabrina Fair," is full of melody, and the "To the ocean now I fly" was equally light and fanciful. *Sabrina's* song, "By the rush-fringed bank," is sparkling and beautifully varied. The scoring is effective throughout, and it is impossible not to be struck with the decided Mendelssohnian tendencies of the composer. "Comus" would be effective set with scenery and performed with costumes. Its presentation last night, however, was so excellent as to scarcely require accessories. Mrs. Gulager sang the soprano solos with taste and discrimination, her voice answering all requirements. Miss Barron was heard with pleasure in the contralto passages; and Mr. Leggat, despite a somewhat exaggerated use of falsetto, was pleasing in the tenor airs. Mr. Remmertz's noble voice awoke applause in the bass solos, but he scarcely gave the words that fine shading and significance which could have been desired. The orchestra was under perfect control, and showed the effects of thorough drill. The second part of the programme consisted of Mr. Horsley's overture to a cantata called "Enterpe," in which two themes are skilfully unfolded; of a madrigal, "Sing Lullaby," for voices alone, which was sung with great evidence of cultivation; and a selection from "The Bridal," a wedding cantata. This last was announced as dedicated by special permission to Miss Nellie Grant and Mr. Algernon Sartoris. It consisted of a graceful and flowing chorus, a well defined march, and an expressive prayer.

Russian Life and Manners—A National Opera.

(St. Petersburg Correspondence of the London *Times*.)

A few nights ago the famous and favorite Russian national opera, *Jizn za Tsaria*, or *Life for the Czar*, composed by Glinka, was given at the Marie Theatre for the 43rd time. Murray says no traveler should leave St. Petersburg without seeing the opera, founded as it is on Russian national melodies, and presenting an admirable and truthful view of Russian life, Russian feelings, and Russian costumes. One little paragraph of Russian history will make this account all the clearer, so let me remind your readers how, a few years after the death of John the Terrible, in 1584, the dynasty of Rurik came to an end, and Ru-sia was delivered over to all sorts of wars and invasions, until 1613, Vladislav and the Poles were turned out of the country, and the present dynasty was founded by the election of young Michael Romanoff. The plot of Life for the Czar is laid in these troubled times, one of the incidents of which was the usurpation of "the False Dmitri," a pretender whose real origin puzzles the historians to this day. By the help of the Poles this Perkin Warbeck actually grasped the crown, but a counter-insurrection ousted him, and he was thrown from a window in the Kremlin. At the last moment they said to him, "Tell us who you are." He refused, but just as they were casting him down he cried out, "I will tell you who I am," but he fell headlong, and the False Dmitri and his secret died together. The time of the opera is a few years later than this. The youth Michael Romanoff had been elected, but the Poles still made head, and were endeavoring to get the new Czar into their power. A party of them (all this is history as well as opera), entering a village, desired the peasant Suzannen to lead them through the forest to the monastery Kastromar, where the young Romanoff was awaiting the fortune of the war then waging between the patriots and the Poles. The peasant led the party of invaders by woods and bogs, and when he knew that the messenger he had secretly and hastily despatched had arrived at the monastery, and that the Czar was safe, he declared his *ruse* to the Poles, who fell upon him and killed him. To this day the descendants of Suzannen, who thus gave his "life for the Czar," are called "the white peasants," and pay no imposts.

So much for history, as it was very kindly related to me the other afternoon in Mdle. Aban's drawing-room by his Excellency General Creg, recently appointed to the high post of Contr'ller of the Exchequer of the Empire. Let us now turn to the opera, and begin by saying that the Marie Theatre is a house of fine and large proportions, handsomely and tastefully decorated in blue and gold and white. It is the home of Russian opera and drama, and the semicircle is broken by exactly the same arrangement of state boxes as exists in the Grand

Theatre. The night of my visit it was full in every part. The Russians never tire of *Jizn za Tsaria*, and no wonder, for it is rich in beautiful melodies founded on national airs, and the composition of its music is correct and masterly. The first rise of the curtain shows us the village of which Suzannen is the elder. It is autumn, and ice already floats down the river in the background, on the banks of which the fishermen's nets are spread out to dry. The daughter of Suzannen, a buxom village belle, is going to be married to Zabinen, expected soon to claim his bride, and bring news from the patriot camp. A peasant chorus—the men in fur-edged "caftans" tied about the waist, the women in "scarafans," prettily striped, and colored skirts—sing to this effect, Antonida, the bride that is to be, wearing her hair in two long plaits tied with blue ribands, and joining in usual opera fashion. The Russian language can be sung with perfect smoothness, and the voice of Antonida (Mdle. Platoff) is a well-trained, sweet and flexible soprano of considerable power. Suzannen (M. Vassilief), her father, is applauded as he enters. His countenance is of a fine type, his voice a very good bass, and he wears a furred cap and a blue caftan, and he carries a long staff. He says, or rather sings, that Russia is in danger, and that it is no time to arrange marriages and holidays. While he laments the bad times, Antonia spies a boat on the river. "It must be my betrothed. It is he!" she cries, running to her father, who answers, "Well, we will see what news she brings." Zabinen (M. Oriooff) is a handsome fellow, a fine specimen of a bridegroom, and a very pleasing tenor. He lands, and kisses his father-in-law that is to be. He brings good news, for the patriots are making way under the leadership of Prince Posharski (who has a monument now at Moscow); and then he and Antonida ask Suzannen whether the marriage cannot be arranged. The villagers, whose grouping and costumes are pretty all this while, join in the lovers' prayers, and the chorus they sing is excellent and much applauded. But Suzannen does not incline to marrying and giving in marriage, with the country in so desperate a position, "And we have no Czar!" "Now," sings Zabinen, "I will tell you my other news. We have found a Czar: Michael Romanoff has been elected." This satisfies Suzannen, who consents to allow the marriage. There is more glad and joyful singing, and so the curtain goes down on the first act, Suzannen, Antonida and Zabinen being called back and loudly applauded. The second act is one of the prettiest spectacles imaginable—ball given by the Polish Commander-in-Chief.

The dance over, helmeted and breast-plated soldiers rush in with bad news from the camp, the ball is broken up, and the curtain falls on act the second. The third act brings us again to Suzannen's cottage, where John, the adopted boy (a girl with rather a fine contralto, but lacking spirit and animation in her action), sits at work and sings to himself. The part is played by Mdle. Kamenksy, and I saw her second appearance. John is apparently a lad of 17, wearing boots, and red blouse, and a head of thick fair hair. Suzannen enters, singing "To-day we will have our marriage-holiday," and the two join in a fine duet. "You are old enough for the army; it is time that you served the Czar; it would please all your family." "I am ready," the lad answers; "when the occasion comes I shall not shrink from serving the Czar." Suzannen's cottage is now invaded by a throng of peasants in caps and caftans and carrying axes. They call in on their way to work to congratulate the Elder on the marriage of his daughter, and they are all bidden to come to the feast in the evening. This is an effective chorus. Zabinen enters, and the same scene continues, and when the peasants have gone, Antonida herself comes in, and the father sings a song of blessing over his child and her lover. John, too, comes forward, and prettily congratulates Antonida. Suzannen, who has been sitting apart for a few moments, then rises, and says: "My heart is quite full with all this happiness, and now we must thank God." The quartet which follows is sung and acted with a perfect semblance of the deepest devotion, all four kneeling down on the stage and thanking God. This is followed by a jubilant burst of song, and then Zabinen leaves, saying, "It is time to prepare."

Now begins the tragedy. The music rises high: there is a loud knocking at the door, and a band of Poles in steel helmets and breast-plates, long brown cloaks, and carrying drawn swords, burst into the cottage, and require Suzannen to lead them to the Convent of Kastromar. The old man's acting at

ALTO. I. SOLO.

Andante sostenuto.

He came to re - veal to the chil - dren of our race,

SOPR. I. SOLO.

Precepts of ho - line - ness for glo - ry that increas - eth. He came un - to the peo - ple
 chosen by His grace, Commanding them to love Him, with love that ne - ver ceas -

TUTTI.

Allegro molto.

eth.
 Ho - ly, ho - ly ev - er bles-sed law!— O sov'reign jus - tice,
 Ho - ly, ho - ly ev - er bles-sed law!— O sov'reign jus - tice,

*poco ritard.
dolce.*

led and fed them night and day; Our just and sacred laws, a

poco ritard.

God of kindness prove Him; And for our good, They command us to love Him.

TUTTI.

a tempo.

SOLO.

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ev - er bles - sed law!— He fought for

p

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ev - er blessed law!—

a tempo.

p

cresc. *sf* *p*

them; He made the deep di - vide; And from a - rid rocks re -

sf

this crisis is exceeding good. "Will you stop to the marriage, and I will take you to the convent tomorrow?" "What do you want with our Russian Czar?" "You have no business with our Czar, and I will not be your guide." Being threatened with death, Suzannen says, "I am not afraid of your swords or of death, and can very well die for my country and Czar." While the Poles consult apart, agreeing to tempt the old man with money, Suzannen whispers hurriedly to John, who, turning pale, has listened to all this, telling him to go quickly across the country to the convent and warn the monks. John slips out of the cottage; the Poles hold out purses to Suzannen, who has conceived his design, and is now ready. "I will take you," he sings, "and we can settle afterwards about the gold."

Antonida rushes in, and clings to her father, begging him not to go. This is a scene of fine acting, and at last Suzannen tears himself violently from his daughter's clinging arms and bids the Poles follow him. Love of country before love of home and children! This calls down thunderous applause. Suzannen being gone with the Poles, the chorus of village girls, and then Zabinen and the peasants, enter, and after an affecting scene with Antonida, well sung and acted, Zabinen and his comrades flourish their axes and leave the cottage in hot chase of the Poles. All the actors, the conductor of the orchestra (M. Napravnik), and nearly all the musicians are Russians. The next, the fourth act of the opera, opens with a night scene. John, the faithful messenger, knocks at the convent gate of Kastromar, and calls for them to open, which they presently do, a crowd of the Russian patriot garrison pouring out. To them John tells his story, with choric interludes, and receives great and just applause from the house of this part of his singing. Then comes a beautiful forest scene, with snow falling in moonlight thrown by an electric lamp. Suzannen and the Poles enter, the latter demanding where they are, and declaring there is no road. "Let us remain here till morning." Suzannen suggests, knowing that by morning John will have reached the convent, and the Czar will have been conveyed away to a place of safety. After some angry singing the Poles agree to halt, turn their hoods over their heads, and crouch picturesquely in the background by a flickering fire. Suzannen cannot sleep, and prepares himself for death.

"By sunrise, my last sunrise, I know the Czar will be saved." He devotes himself to his fate, singing his death-song, on his knees for the last words, kissing the floor to a loud clapping of hands. Again he sings, "This morning I prepared the marriage, and now I am ready to die. I shall have no grave. Wolves and birds will eat my body. Good-bye, my children!" He lulls himself asleep to soft music, but is soon awakened by the Poles. Morning is breaking, and the sun is rising red through the trees. Again Suzannen falls on his knees, crying, "The Czar is safe. I have led you to a place where we are all lost together," and the curtain descends as the Poles fall on him with their swords. Needless to say, the applause was deafening, John and Suzannen being called several times before the curtain.

At the beginning of act 5 two months have elapsed, the Poles have been defeated, and the first Romanoff Czar is about to be crowned at Moscow. It is the very day of the coronation. The city is *en fete* and the street, we see, is lined with people in their holiday clothes. Troops, with quaint dresses and arms, pass on their way to the Kremlin. The populace follow, and then Antonida and Zabinen (married now) and John come on the stage alone, and are presently interrogated by an officer, sent with four soldiers in red dresses, white shields, and halberds, with orders to find Zabinen and his family and present them to the Czar. Antonida wears her wedding dress and the head gear which denotes a matron. When John has sung a song, of somewhat languid length, followed by a trio, the soldiers lead them off, and then the curtain rises on a fine spectacle which concludes the opera. The Kremlin and the open space before it are excellently painted, and in front is ranged the crowd which waits to see the Czar pass, the soldiers standing with the Zabinen family, ready to present them to the young Romanoff, who would never have come to his crown but for the heroism of Suzannen. The national music swells high, the chorus is loud and finely sung, and the clang of the Kremlin bells is cleverly imitated from behind the scenes. The curtain falls as soon as the procession of the Czar begins to pass, and before the Czar himself has come into view. It is against Russian law to pre-

sent a Czar on the stage, though I believe John the Terrible has been allowed behind the footlights of late years.

Such is this truly national opera, *Life for the Czar*, ever listened to with delight by a Russian audience.

Music in London.

NEW ORATORIOS.—NEW SIGNS. The first performance in London of two new oratorios by English composers should not be allowed to pass with merely the usual reports, because it is an event of great absolute and relative consequence. Our present business, however, is not to discuss the musical value of either work, still less to institute a comparison between them. Whether the *Light of the World* be better or worse than *St. John the Baptist* matters nothing. It is enough to know that both are accepted on every hand as worthy examples of contemporary native art, and as valuable additions to a repertory in which English music has always held an honored place. Their simultaneous appearance, taken in connection with other things, presents a subject for consideration of a very agreeable nature. Unquestionably musical life is reviving among us in all its forms, from the lowest to the highest—in the latter most of all, just now. Not only are veterans like Mr. Macfarren showing that their genius is not exhausted, but the younger generation has begun to work in earnest, and with rare ability. The revival is obvious, though it may not be explained. We see the phenomenon, but what has caused it lies hidden from view, and can no more be discovered than the secret of the "Augustine ages" which, at wide intervals, have yielded such a wealth of intellect to the world. How far the revival may extend—whether we are entering on a golden era of English music such as that which conferred lustre upon the sixteenth century, is another matter for speculation; but while causes and ultimate results are alike concealed, present results are plain enough, and are of such a nature as to excite the highest satisfaction and hope. What significance attaches, for example, to the production last autumn of not less than four important sacred works—the *Hagar* of Sir Gore Ouseley, Mr. Sullivan's *Light of the World*, Mr. Macfarren's *St. John the Baptist*, and Mr. Smart's *Jacob!* These works may differ in value, but we make bold to say that not one of them falls below a distinguished rank among modern things of their kind. But there is other evidence of reviving musical life. Young composers like Mr. Gadsby, Mr. Prout, Mr. Alfred Holmes, and Mr. J. F. Barnett, are coming forward from time to time, with compositions in the highest school of art, and are showing themselves possessed in various degrees of the right to graduate with honors. These, and such as these, are important manifestations, but they must not be looked at by themselves. In connection with them we should note an extraordinary state of musical activity all over the land. Bristol and Glasgow established triennial festivals last year; Leeds has just resolved upon the same course, and Liverpool is fast making up its mind to follow suit, while in scores of smaller places musical societies are doing hearty and extended work for our art. It is impossible to note these facts without regarding the future most hopefully. At the same time we should not lose sight of the responsibility they entail. "Of him to whom much is given, much will be required," and if we are entering upon an era of great musical gifts, we shall be expected to use those gifts well. Here the great question of musical training confronts us reproachfully. What has England done—what is she doing to utilize her native talent? Very little, unfortunately; and we commend the fact to serious consideration.—*Mus. World*, Mar. 28.

MONDAY POPULAR CONCERTS.—The last concert was again distinguished by the assistance of Herr Joachim and Dannreuther, and a feature of the programme was Beethoven's quartet in B flat, rendered in a really perfect manner by M. M. Joachim, Ries, Strauss, and Piatti. There is no better qualified executant than the great Hungarian violinist to interpret the spirit of Beethoven, and there is no work which more gratefully discloses its beauty under poetic treatment than this posthumous quartet. The presto could not have been more admirably played, and fully deserved its encore. The other concerted piece was Haydn's familiar quartet in D major (Op. 64), and the programme contained two solos—Beethoven's piano-forte sonata in A flat (Op. 110), and a violin sonata in G major, by Tartini, which Herr Joachim introduced for the first time. Herr Dannreuther was the pianist, and

carried off much honor. Miss Edith Wynne, who sang Schubert's "Junge Nonne," also gave Gounod's "Quando à te lieta" violoncello obbligato, by Signor Piatti, and the latter obtained an encore.

With Mr. Arthur Chappell's benefit, the season of Monday Popular Concerts came to a close this week. An unusually long and varied programme signified the occasion. The first piece was Mozart's Orphean quintet in G minor, for stringed instruments, played by MM. Joachim, Ries, Strauss, Zerbini, and Piatti. Mr. Santley followed with the well-known air "Nasce al bosco," from "Ezio," Handel's 23rd Italian opera. Then came Signor Piatti with two movements from a violoncello sonata by Veracini, accompanied by Sir Julius Benedict, heard for the first time, and certainly not for the last, at the Monday Popular Concerts. After this Mr. Halle and Mdme. Norman-Neruda played the air with variations from Mozart's sonata in F, for piano-forte and violin, the next instrumental piece being Schubert's Impromptu in B flat, for piano-forte *solo*, of which Mr. Hällé took charge. Brahms and Bach supplied chiefly the second part of the programme, and variety was attained by the part-singing of four Swedish ladies, Mdlles. Hilda Wilderberg and Amy Aberg, Mdme. Maria Patterson and Mdlle. Wilhelmina Soderland, who in Brussels and Paris have recently courted distinction. Their efforts were encored by acclamation. The large room at St. James's Hall was filled by an enthusiastic audience who called back the performers after each piece. The season just closed has been an unusually fruitful one: taking the Saturdays in also, the director has produced some two-and-twenty previously unheard works.—*Orchestra*.

PASSION WEEK has been solemnized by a performance of Bach's Passion music at St. Paul's, by a series of sacred soirées at the Albert Hall, and by the performance of the "Messiah" last night by the Sacred Harmonic Society. The first-named event comprised the S. Matthew Passion. A large audience included Mr. Gladstone. The service was opened by the Rev. Dr. Webber, and Dr. Stainer conducted the music. After the "Miserere" and prayers, the "Passion" commenced by the thrilling chorus "Come, ye daughters, and weep with me," followed by the pathetic chorales, recitations, and airs. The effect beneath the cathedral dome was wonderfully striking, especially that of the chorales, in which all the congregation seemed to join, and of the sudden bursts of chorus which are meant to convey the wild shouts of the excited crowd, with their cries of "Barabbas," and "Let him be crucified." At that point of the recital where Christ arrives in Gethsemane, and "began to be sorrowful and very heavy," the congregation, as usual, paused for prayer and meditation, after which the chorus sang the agonizing air, "O grief! now pants His agonizing heart." The soloists were Mr. Winn, who declaimed the music set apart for our Saviour with much effect; Mr. Kerringham, Mr. Thornton, Mr. Delacy, and Mr. Hoscroft. The soprano and contralto numbers were rendered by boy choristers, one of the youthful vocalists showing much appreciation of his subject by his singing of the fine air, "See the Saviour!" The piano-forte accompaniments were entrusted to Mr. Frederick Walker, and Mr. Cooper presided at the organ. The music went well throughout under the leadership of Dr. Stainer, the band of strings and reeds being excellent, especially the latter in the air "Although mine eyes." The oratorio was preceded by a few prayers, and followed by the blessing; the immense congregation appearing most attentive and devout throughout the whole.

The performances of the Albert Hall Choral Society are being continued throughout the week. On Monday the work was the "Messiah," which, favorably executed by the well-organized choir, attracted a large and brilliant audience; among them the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh. Mdme. Alvsleben, Miss Anna Williams, Mr. Vernon Rigby and Sig. Agnesi were the principals. On Tuesday the masterpieces were "Stabat Mater" and the "Lobgesang." Royalty again graced the scene in the persons of the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and the Marchioness of Lorne and her husband. The chief parts were sustained by Mdme. Sherrington, Mdme. Patey, Mr. Cummings, Sig. Urio, and Mr. Campbell, (Sig. Campobello). Bach's "Passion" according to St. Matthew was performed last night, and is to be repeated tonight, (Thursday) and Friday, with Mdme. Alvsleben, Mdme. Sherrington, Mdme. Patey, Messrs. Cummings, Beale and Perkins as principals. With a repetition of the "Messiah" on Saturday this excellent series of sacred performances will close.

Dwight's Journal of Music.

BOSTON, MAY 2, 1874.

"Monotony" of Good Things.—The New Music.

We have heard through various agencies of late,—most largely and with best setting forth, however, in the Thomas Concerts,—a great deal of the orchestral music of the "new school" so called, a great many works or extracts from the new composers;—not only Wagner, who denies "pure" music, don't believe in its sufficiency save as a dependent ally of the sung or spoken word; but also Liszt, who *does* believe in it, and Berlioz, Brahms, Volkmann, Svendsen, Raff, and many more. A better description of the general impression made by this whole mass of would-be original productions, we have nowhere met of late than in the following paragraph. The italics are our own.

*Judging the orchestral music of the new school by what we have heard here this season, it is impossible not to be struck with the absence of form and the lack of continuity of idea that distinguish the greater portion of it. Melody does not seem to be one of its qualities, and there appears to be a perfect dearth of inspiration in it. It is labored and learned, but it is rarely satisfying. Beauty of conception and graceful treatment are not to be found among its characteristics. Instrumental effects are its most prominent features, and these are pushed to an extent that is almost bizarre in its constant straining after something new. The result is that one piece of this school seems to be almost a reflection of another in its struggle for extreme harmonies and startling instrumentation. It is sensational music, if we may be permitted to thus apply the term. It comes from the head rather than from the heart, and savors more of profound talent than of uncontrollable genius. With all of this learning, this novelty, this abandonment of old forms and old theories, this will originality, subtlety, independence, and yearning to do, the school of to-day has, as yet, given us *naught* that compares with the masterpieces of that earlier school which it professes to supplement. If it be true that the new school begins where the old school left off, it has not yet been made manifest that the old school did not leave off in the right place. But, for all this it is necessary that we should be kept fully informed of the art in its various stages of development; for if, as it is claimed, modern art is on the verge of reaching the goal towards which it has so painfully toiled, it will be interesting to observe it in its various transition stages and to watch it as it culminates. At present, it cannot be denied that modern music is almost drearily monotonous, or else that its prophets are only half inspired.*

"Dreary monotony" is good,—the phrase, we mean, but not the thing. Yet it is just this same "dreary monotony" of the newness which our critic, from whose long review of the past musical season in the *Saturday Evening Gazette* we take the passage, tauntingly commends as antidote to the "monotony" of good things, of real works of genius, for which he seldom omits an opportunity of berating the Harvard Symphony Concerts. *Similia similibus*,—in wholesale doses! None of your *infinitesimals*! But now suppose the Harvard Association were to follow the prescription, open its arms to the composers whom this too friendly, candid censor has described so truly, and place them on an equal platform side by side with Beethoven and Mozart: what criticism think you they would then get from so systematic a fault-finder!

He thanks Mr. Thomas for giving our public "an opportunity of learning what progress has been made, or what new developments are making, in instrumental music," so that amateurs may judge the new school for themselves, instead of "leaving them to the mercies of a small clique that has hitherto attempted to confine music here *within narrow bounds*," &c. To this two answers are pertinent and, one would think, sufficient.

1. It is well to watch the progress of the day; and we too can thank Mr. Thomas for ministering to our curiosity in this. Some music-lovers are like novel readers, so desperately smitten with the passion for novelty, so *blasé* with indulgence, that their cry is ever for the latest new work, smoking from the press, even if it be bad or worthless. But readers not so self-abused, not helpless prey to ennui when they have Shakspeare close by on the shelf, have also a desire to look into the new signs of prog-

ress,—find out whether it really *be* progress. This service Mr. Thomas does so fully for us all, and with such admirable means for doing it, that there is certainly no need of dedicating every programme, every course of concerts, to the same end. Is there no propriety in choosing, cultivating special fields in Art? Is there no need, among all the medleys and "attractions" of an hour, the tempting displays of "new goods," the sops thrown to Cerberus,—however these may charm, whatever they may teach,—no need of something else to keep the taste for music from running after every fashion, with no ever-present, sure corrective, no ideal, pure, authoritative models of immortal Art to turn to? Is there no use, no call for any concerts dedicated wholly to the real master-works of Music? If no one else will give them, then should we not be thankful to the Society that will? And these works are not heard to best advantage, do not exert their deepest influence, though technically they run smooth as clock-work, in concerts and by an orchestra mainly contrived for setting forth the points of the new music,—or rather for availing of the room it gives for showing what a model modern orchestra can do. Our dear old masters are ill mated in such company; they seem to shiver and grow dull in the unwanted and ungenial sphere; if they could speak, would they not each and all say, like one of our statesmen, "take me out of that crowd," if you love me? Their noisy, "dreary monotony" affects the sweet and wholesome air in which we live as badly as a raging anthracite furnace heat! And you, kind audience, how can you fairly hear us, feel our meaning, in a sphere so troubled, full of jarring, cross vibrations!

Besides, the Symphony Concerts do not bind themselves never to give a new work; they only bind themselves always to give good works, and not allow the great Symphonies, &c., to lose due opportunity of reasonably frequent hearing,—and that in programmes which have some consistency and unity (in which true contrast is implied).

2. The "monotony of the average Boston programme,"—during the days, that means, when the Harvard concerts occupied the field unchallenged,—has been not at all so bad as these fine friends of "progress" try to make it out. In their nine years these concerts have given pretty nearly *all* the Symphonies, Overtures, Concertos, &c., which rank among musicians as first-class, all which have kept their freshness in the chief musical centres of the world. In short they have given 44 different Symphonies; 52 different Overtures, and 20 miscellaneous orchestral works of some importance; 45 Concertos for piano, violin, &c.; more large Concert Arias, with orchestra, than were ever heard before in this country; besides the enlivening variety of choice songs, wholly fresh, instrumental solos, &c., too numerous to mention. They have introduced, for the first time in Boston, 15 Symphonies, 25 Overtures, 28 Concertos. Suppose they were never to increase the list of Symphonies, but keep on playing them round in turn, at the rate of ten concerts every year: each Symphony would get a hearing not so often as once in four years! Yet our critics profess to know them all too well!—But what appreciative audience would forgive the managers if the great ones of Beethoven, the great Schubert in C, the best by Schumann, &c., were shelved for even one or two years? So, if the taste of the true loyal public is to be considered, where will the room be in such concerts for a frequent substitution of the new works? Moreover, is not variety and contrast possible, has it not in these very concerts been continually shown to be possible, without going out of the range of that great mass of old acknowledged master works which we have just enumerated?

We have more to say on these points, but must give room to other matter now.

Concerts.

Two of the most unique and fresh among the many concerts of Pianoforte music were Mr. Boscovitz's Recitals, in the hall of the Apollo Club,—a charming little room for chamber music, and particularly favorable for the appreciation of piano music. The first (second of his series) was on the afternoon of April 10, when Mr. Boscovitz offered the following remarkable programme:

1. Concerto, in the Italian style. J. S. Bach
2. Sonata Heroique..... Christ. Nicelmann
3. Allegro, 2 Mesto, 3 Vivace a la Fuga. (First time.) J. S. Bach
4. Tenor Aria, "Cosi fan tutte." Mozart Dr. Langmaid.
5. a. Nocturne, op. 9, No. 2. b. Polonaise, Op. 25, c. Mazurka, Op. 33, No. 4. d. Berceuse, Op. 57. e. Mazurka, Op. 17, No. 1. f. Valse, Op. 34, No. 3. Chopin
6. Barcarolle, Op. 60..... Chopin
7. Gigue, E flat, "Suite Francaise."..... J. S. Bach
8. Sonata, in A. (First time). Domenico Scarlatti
9. a. Berceuse, & Grille, Op. 12. c. Des Abends, (evening), Op. 12. d. Romanze, Op. 32. Schumann
10. Tenor Romanza, Flute..... Gounod Dr. Langmaid.
11. a. Song without words, D minor. b. Volkleder, A minor..... Mendelssohn
12. Au bord d'une Source Etude, (Année de Pélerinages.) b. Capriccio a la Hongroise, with an original Cadenza. (First time.)..... Liszt

The room was filled with very musical people, and we doubt if any audience has been more thoroughly interested, and in some sense captivated, by any concert of the kind this season. For Mr. Boscovitz's playing is decidedly individual; he has his own way of treating things. Playing all from memory, he humors time and accent, light and shade, according to his own fancy, continually indulging in little *finesse*s of expression, or in startling effects and contrasts, which keep attention on the alert, and often give a sense of exquisite surprise; but quite as often, after some delicately finished phrase or passage, refined almost to airy nothing, comes the shock of such *forzando* and such stunning accent, particularly just before leaving off, that it actually seems as if he meant to trample out the flames he had been kindling and fanning into life. It is all quite exciting, and there is an undeniable sort of electricity, or animal magnetism about the man, which even tells more for the moment than the deepest feeling or inspired imagination. The "Italian Concerto" and the little *Gigue* by Bach were admirably played. And so was the curious old Sonata by Nicelmann, a pupil of Sebastian Bach, composed in the same year with Handel's "Messiah" (1741), and arranged for concert performance by Mr. Boscovitz from a MS. in the possession of Czerny. It is a fresh, healthy, genial composition, and we may thank the concert-giver for bringing out some of the forgotten live things from a period "when it was the *fadion* to write good music," which certainly it is not now.

In his rendering of Chopin, exquisite and brilliant as much of it is, we often feel a certain extravagance, which is quite wilful, and sometimes pushed to coquetry; you could not take it altogether seriously, and if you could not help applauding, neither could you keep from laughing. In one of the Mazurkas this was remarkably the case. It was a new interpretation, with a certain fascination and electric influence about it: but would you care to have Chopin all translated into such a style?—Instead of the caprice with an "Original Cadenza," the 8th Hungarian Rhapsody was given.

Dr. LANGMAID sang the beautiful Mozart Aria: "Un aura amoroza," in a very sweet and sympathetic voice, with fine style and expression; and so too the Romanza from the garden scene in *Faust*.

The third Recital (April 17) was attended with an eager interest. The programme was as follows:

1. Fantasia, D Minor..... Kirnberger
2. a. Nocturne, op. 9, No. 1. b. Mazurka, Op. 56, No. 3
3. c. Impromptu, Op. 29, No. 3. d. Valse, Op. 18, No. 4..... Chopin
4. Hungarian Dance, for four hands, No. 1..... Brahms
5. Hungarian Sketches. a. Youthfulness. b. The Chapel. c. The Hussar's Ride. d. Dances under the Linden..... Volkmann
6. Ballad, Op. 52..... Chopin
7. a. Polonaise, in E. b. Gavotte, G minor. J. S. Bach
8. c. Allegro..... Pollini
9. March from the "Leonore" Sinfonie, Raff. Transcription by..... F. Boscovitz

The Fantasia by Kirnberger, another of old Bach's pupils, has a great deal of beauty, and was beautifully played. The execution of the Chopin pieces displayed the same singular sleight of hand, the same

exquisite delicacy, contrasts of sudden strength, kitten-like playing with the theme and humorizing of tempo,—always with a rare precision and vitality of touch, that we observed before. The *Ballade* in F minor, the fourth and last of the tribe, is also the most frightfully difficult, and its successful execution was an extraordinary feat indeed. The graceful little *Polonaise*, from one of the "French Suites," by Bach,—a quiet, unpretending thing compared with the fiery ones by Chopin—and the fresh and charming *Gavotte* from one of the larger set which he distinguished as the "English" suites, were among the gems of the programme, and were much enjoyed; only that sudden accent of the first note of the phrase in the little *Trio* (or second *gavotte*) in the major, seemed to us to disturb its quiet, simple character. The third little piece in the same group of antiques, by Pollini, bore family resemblance to the works of Domenico Scarlatti.—In the Hungarian *Dance and Sketches*, very pleasing little pieces, for four hands, the upper part was nicely played by Miss MARY UNDERWOOD. The March from Raff's ghoulish *Symphony* lost something of its brightness and its smartness in Mr. Boscovit's transcription.

The audience went away with a good appetite, and doubtless more such concerts will be very welcome in their season.

CROWDED OUT.—Notices of the new Orchestral Club, the Lucca-Thomas Concerts, and some others must lie over for the present.

THE TRIENNIAL FESTIVAL, our Boston "Birmingham," is next in order,—a whole week of noble music, on a grand scale, in our noble Music Hall! The HANDEL and HAYDN SOCIETY have devoted a whole season to the zealous work of preparation, and Mr. ZERRAHN has made the chorus of 500 voices thoroughly at home and sure in all the music of a formidable programme. With the Thomas orchestra strengthened by our own best musicians for accompaniment, with Miss EDITH WYNNE once more for principal soprano, and a goodly list of our own best solo singers, and with Mr. LANG at the great Organ, all promises the best success.

The week practically begins, with a Public Rehearsal of Bach's "Passion Music," to-morrow (Sunday) evening. On Tuesday evening the Festival proper is to open with Handel's patriotic *Oratorio of Judas Maccabeus*, in which Miss Wynne sang so delightfully when she was here before. But the whole programme of the week is in the daily papers. Let no true music lover fail to realize that the event is close upon us!

"THE ART THEORIES OF RICHARD WAGNER." The very able, candid and elaborate series of articles upon this subject, which we have copied lately from the London *Musical Standard*, are from the pen of the literary editor of that Journal, and foreign editor of the London *Guardian*, Mr. John Cowdry. We understand that that portion of them which describes and defines Wagner's theories was submitted beforehand to two of the leaders of the Wagner movement in London, and every sentence was so framed as to be admitted by them as fair and exact. Of course this does not apply to the writer's criticisms and deductions. In London musical circles the articles have been generally accepted as the first complete, and only unbiased statement of the Wagner case to English readers.

To-day we print an article by Mr. Joseph Bennett, who examines Wagner's idea of "the poetic basis of music," and points out its fallacy with a most clear and logical power of statement. It is a sound, careful, lawyer-like argument, particularly interesting, and most true in what it says of the relations of Wagner to Beethoven, on whose alleged "confession" of the "mistake" of a life-time Wagner presumes to build!

Musical Correspondence.

CONCERT-NOTES IN NEW YORK.

As the season draws to a close, the concert programmes accumulate so rapidly that I can hardly give to each one the detailed notice which it deserves. Taking them in their order, the first on the list is:

Apr. 29th. An extra concert, given by the Thomas Orchestra at Steinway Hall. Beethoven's noble overture to *Egmont* opened the programme, and was followed by Raff's "Forest Symphony," a work,

which, ever fresh and charming, grows in interest with each hearing. Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" overture; The Allegro from Bach's Concerto for string orchestra; and the grand War March of the Priests, from Mendelssohn's *Athalie*, were the orchestral selections for the second part of the bill. Mr. S. B. Mills played the Larghetto and Finale from Chopin's F minor Concerto. The rendering of the marvellous tone-poem is a favorite task of his, and one which he has never accomplished with greater success than on this particular evening. If his playing is not over passionate it is, at least, not lacking in any of the other qualities necessary to the proper interpretation of such a work.

Apr. 11. The Brooklyn Philharmonic Society, at the fifth and last concert of the season, offered a programme unusually rich in variety and attractiveness, beginning with Schubert's Symphony of "heavenly length" [in C], which, under the baton of Mr. Thomas, was magnificently rendered, as were also Wagner's "Vorspiel Die Meistersinger"; Brahms's variations on a Theme from Haydn, [new]; and Beethoven's *Leonora* overture, No. 3. Mme. Ilma di Murska, although suffering from severe indisposition, surprised us by the vigor and effectiveness with which she gave Beethoven's great Scene and Aria, "Ah perfido." It was not, perhaps, the selection best suited to her voice and style of singing, and we half feared some addition or alteration would be made to the score, but the music was honestly sung—and very well withal. The singer also gave an "Aria Hongroise" by F. Doppler, with Flute Obligato—a difficult piece, and pity 'tis 'twere not quite impossible.

The pianist of the evening was Mr. Richard Hoffman, an artist, who having attained very high distinction in his profession, is heard in public only often enough to make his seclusion a matter of general regret. His selections were Mendelssohn's "Serenade and Allegro Giojoso," with orchestra and a trio of Chopin dances. Mr. Hoffman's playing is characterized by a certain refinement and delicacy of touch which are peculiarly needful for the Mendelssohn and Chopin music, while, at the same time, he is master of all the resources of the piano. For some seasons past he has given series of recitations at Chickering Hall which were attended by such of the musical dilettanti as were fortunate enough to secure an invitation. This year, however, these recitations are discontinued.

Mr. Hoffman's reception by the Brooklyn audience was enthusiastic and the applause which followed his very artistic rendering of the "Serenade" showed a just appreciation of his effort. Seldom, indeed, have I heard the three familiar Chopin dances with so fine a sense of their meaning as under his fingers.

The Society, under the direction of Mr. Thomas, has done a great work this season, as will be seen from the repertoire, which I subjoin:

Symphonies.

Beethoven—No. 8 in F, Op. 93; No. 7, in A, Op. 92. Raff No. 3, Op. 153, *Im Walde* (in the Forest). Schumann—No. 2, in C Major, Op. 61, why will the society persist in calling this "Oscar"? Schubert—*Symphony* in C Major.

Beethoven—*Septet*, Opus 20. Wagner—Introduction and Finale—"Tristan and Isolde" (first time); *Bacchanele*—Tannhäuser (manuscript); *Huldigung's March*; *Vorspiel*, *Lohengrin*; *Der Ritt der Walküre* (manuscript); *Vorspiel*—*Die Meistersinger von Nuernberg*. Liszt—*Rhapsodie Hongroise*, No. 2; *Symphonic Poem*—"Les Preludes." Rubinstein—Ivan IV—*[Der Grausame, the Cruel]*, Charakterbild (new). Svensden—*Symphonic Introduction to the Drama*, "Sigurd Slembé" (first time). Brahms—Variations on a theme from Haydn (new). Volkmann—*Serenade* in D minor (new), with Violoncello Obligato. Berlioz—*Scherzo*—*La Reine Mab, ou la Fée des Songes*.

Concertos.

Joachim—"Hungarian" (first time), for Violin. Goltermann—No. 3, for Violoncello. Mendelssohn—*Serenade and Allegro giojoso*.

Weber—*Quartet for Horns*. Chopin—*Polonaise*, *Mazurka* and *Valse*.

Overtures.

Beethoven—*Overture—Coriolanus*, Op. 62. Leonore, No. 3. Vocal Selections.

Mozart—*Aria—Le Nozze di Figaro* [Baritone]; *Aria—Vol che sapete*, from *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Gluck—*Aria*, *Iphigenia en Aulide*; *Aria*, "Che faro," from "Orpheus." Rossini—*Duet*, "Misera che faro," from "Matilda di Savran." Gounod—*Aria des Bijoux*, from "Faust." Thomas—*Grand Scene et air d'Ophepha*, from "Hamlet." Pacini—*Scena and Cavatina*, for Cilmene, from "Saffo." Proch-Arin—*Thema and Variations*. Beethoven—"Ah perfido," Op. 65. Doppler—*Aria Hongroise*.

It remained for the officers of the society to testify their appreciation of the valuable service rendered by Mr. Thomas and his Orchestra, which they did by tendering to Mr. Thomas the use of the Academy for a complimentary Concert, under the auspices of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Society.

This concert took place on Wednesday evening, April 22nd. The bill was quite attractive, including Raff's "Leonora" Symphony. The "Tannhäuser" Overture; theme and variations from Schubert's quartet in D minor; the Scherzo, Nocturne and Wedding March, from Mendelssohn's "Midsummernight's dream Music." Invitation à la danse (adapted to Orchestra, by Berlioz); besides vocal selections sung by Mr. Whitney.

April 18. The sixth and last concert for the season, of the N. Y. Philharmonic Society, took place at the Academy of Music. The Orchestral pieces were as follows: Goldmark's *Sakuntala* overture; Suite by German; Beethoven's *Egmont* music entire. Mr. W. H. Pope reading the poem, while the two songs were rendered by Mme. de Murska, who also sang "Ah Perfido" and an aria from *Roberto*.

April 25. Sixth Symphony concert, and last of the season, by Mr. Thomas at Steinway Hall.

A fine performance of Mozart's *Symphony* in E flat, was followed by Bach's aria; "O pardon me, my God," from the Passion music, sung by Miss Adelaide Phillips, with violin obligato by Mr. Listemann. The favorite contralto sang, also, Handel's *Aria*: "Dove sei amato bene." Between these vocal pieces came the variations on a theme by Haydn, (Brahms) which gave so much satisfaction when played at the Brooklyn Philharmonic. The *vorspiel* to "Die Meistersinger" ended part first of the bill.

In the intermission, as Mr. Thomas was about to step from the stage, Mr. Richard Grant White came forward and, with a few well chosen words, presented an elegant casket containing a certificate of deposit for a large amount of money, a gift to Mr. Thomas, from his numerous friends and admirers in this city. Mr. Thomas, taken quite by surprise, responded very gracefully testifying to his appreciation of the valuable present, and his determination to continue in and extend his valuable service to the cause of art.

The programme ended with the seventh Symphony of Beethoven, superbly played.

The operatic season will close on May 2nd, and, on Sunday evening, May 3rd, all the artists of the Strakosch Opera troupe will unite in a grand sacred-concert at the Academy of Music, for the benefit of Mr. J. C. Fryer, who has been long associated with Mr. Strakosch in the capacity of Treasurer. This gentleman will be pleasantly remembered by all those who have been brought into contact with him, and the benefit is sufficient testimony of the esteem in which he is held by the artists of the opera. The announcement of his benefit will assure a liberal patronage, and one remarkable feature in the programme will excite general interest, both in New York and in the adjacent cities. This is the performance of Rossini's *Stabat Mater*: entire with full orchestra and chorus—in which both Mme. Nilsson and Mme. Lucca will take part, and sing together for the first time in America, the "Quis Est Homo." These two distinguished artists will sing a duet together for the first time in this magnificent composition. It should be remembered that this will be the last appearance of these famous singers, Mme. Nilsson leaving the country a few days later; and the last concert of Mr. Strakosch Opera troupe.

In the grand Sacred Concert Mme. Nilsson will sing (by request) Handel's air "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

The musical public of New York and vicinity will not be slow to appreciate the attractive programme offered by Mr. Fryer, and it is to be hoped that Boston will send a good sized delegation to his benefit.

A. A. C.

CHICAGO, April 18. Since my former communication quite a number of interesting things have happened here, but a pressure of other things has hindered my attending properly to the lawful curiosity of your readers.

Some weeks ago the First Congregationalist Church had occasion to jubilate in a new organ, built by Steer and Turner of Westfield. The organ has three manuals, about fifteen stops in the Great, the same in the Swell, eight in the Choir and ten in the pedale. The voicing is of a good quality, and the mechanical work very superior—fully equal to other first-class work. In the "balancing," however, I find many things that do not satisfy me (not but what they may be all the better for that). The choir stops are too soft, especially the dulciana, the geigen principal and melodia. This lightness of tone is made in deference to their use in accompanying solos on the Swell when the swell-

blinds are closed. While this point is gained, the organ loses much more than enough to compensate for it, in the diminished effectiveness of these stops as accompaniments when the swell is open, and still more in their use as solos—as any organist will easily see. Such departures from established systems of "balancing" are a frequent peculiarity of builder's still inexperienced in the construction of large organs. I have never known a case of a builder's first large organ proving a real success. The pedale here is unusually full having ten stops, including a 32 ft. bourdon. Yet in the bravura pedalling in the concerts the pedale did not all "come out" properly. In my opinion this instrument reflects great credit on the builders, and promises fair for their future, but as a concert instrument it will always leave a certain effectiveness and *out-spoken quality of tone* (such as one always hears in a good Hook organ) to be desired. In church playing, the smoothness and sweetness of tone will prove highly acceptable. The instrument is reported to have cost about \$12,000.

The opening concert brought us Mr. D. Hesse Wilkins from Rochester, who played Hesse's Toccata in A flat, and "God save the King" variations, and three pieces from Batiste—all of which by a funny chance happened to be very hackneyed here. It seems that Mr. Wilkins was not aware that the Batiste pieces were included in American reprints, but supposed they existed only in the imported copies and were rare. In these Mr. Wilkins displayed a great deal of taste, except in the continual use of the *tremolo*—a stop which I regard as rather shaky when heard for half hour continuously. In the Hesse pieces Mr. Wilkins displayed a degree of skill as an organist entirely satisfactory, and fully all that the pieces admitted of exhibiting. In the arrangement of the programme it struck me as a little singular that five selections should be given to two authors, and they not exactly of the highest rank.

Mr. Wilkins seemed to me to be an organist with a real respect for his instrument, and a high degree of skill, thoroughly orthodox, and "down on" overtures and such like ungodly doings on the organ; and as such I should have been glad to have welcomed him to this city as a resident. Still, for myself, I cannot exactly see wherein Batiste's music is less secular, because it is written "for the organ," than light overtures which make no pretense to sacred qualities. The simple truth is that Batiste's music is through and through *secular*—a mere study of *effects*, which (to be sure) are many of them pleasing and new, but still music of no real depth or dignity, and in my opinion entirely unsuitable to accompany or express the worship of God. That I use it in church sometimes is simply because I know that the majority of people do not go to church to worship God, and for various and sundry other reasons which it would be out of place for Dwight's Journal to enter into.

The same concert gave us two pieces by Mr. Falk, "Selections from Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony" and "Overture to the Merry Wives of Windsor." In response to an encore, he played Buck's variations on "Annie Laurie." Mr. Falk has a splendid *technique*, but in public generally plays too fast, not giving the organ time to speak or the public time to swallow.

This week Mr. Eddy played a concert on the same organ. He played among other things Bach's A-minor prelude and fugue, and the Thiele variations in A flat, Buck's Triumphal March, Overture to Stradella, etc. But as I did not hear the concert and have seen no competent critic that did, I cannot say more about the playing. I believe the Thiele piece has been played here but twice before, both times by Mr. Buck. Our nearest Thiele man

to Chicago is Mr. H. B. Roney at East Saginaw, Mich., who plays this piece and the Concert-satz in C minor by heart. If there are any others, will they kindly rise and explain?

The Liederkranz Society gave "Masaniello" in McVicker's theater six times to good houses, and the papers said well, under the conduct of Mr. Balatka. I guess the solo singing was a little "off" (as the young men say now), but the orchestra and chorus good.

Last night Mr. Silas G. Pratt gave a Symphony concert in McCormick Hall, with an orchestra of about sixty. He gave his symphony (called by the papers *opera* 16—whose Latin I cannot say), "Magdelena," a lament showing in tones what Murillo tried to paint in his picture, and a new March, "Homage to Chicago."

Mr. Pratt is a young gentleman of a great deal of energy and ambition. When a music salesman he practiced evenings and saved his money, and then with some assistance went to Berlin, where he studied about two years. He has written no end of piano pieces and songs under various aliases, most of them very poor stuff, and a small number of very carefully written pieces under his own name. He has a very delicate touch, and plays the piano with a great deal of taste. But it is as a composer that he expects to fulfil his mission, and last night he had the satisfaction of hearing the first complete rendering of his first Symphony—on which we may well enough congratulate him, for it is as hard to plant a symphony or other heavy orchestral work in America as it is to plant corn in New Hampshire—you have to shoot it in through the cracks, as it were.

As to the symphony itself, judged by itself as a first work, and a first extensive orchestral study, it is all that could be expected. It shows a fair quality of ideas, very well treated. As a great tone-poem it lacks contents. That is to say it has the form of a symphony, but not the substance. The orchestral treatment is generally after the new school. The best movement is the last, although it contains a number of very cheap and common ideas, not redeemed by thoroughly artistic treatment. The *Andante* is quite a successful piece of writing. Although the instrumentation is open to the criticisms indicated above and inseparable from the efforts of any artist who has not acquired complete mastery of the means of expression in his chosen medium, to my mind the work lacks more in the intrinsic value, depth, and suggestiveness of the ideas themselves; and although the author may hope to reach a high degree of skill in the technical construction of symphonies and other orchestral works, I do not see any reasonable expectation of his ever becoming a tone-poet of the quality that bespeaks the attention of the whole world. Nor when symphony concerts are as scarce as they now are would it seem to me good economy to waste these far too rare opportunities in the production of comparatively insignificant new works, to the exclusion of the rich master-works almost entirely unheard. When symphony concerts are plenty, it is of course desirable to lend ready hearing to every well-constructed new work. The pearl-divers open many an oyster for every goodly pearl they find; and our oyster last night certainly contained a pearl, though perhaps not large nor of the finest lustre.

I make these remarks because I believe them to be justified and proper, although I am fully aware that in speaking so of a first hearing of a new work it has often happened to critics to overlook the merits of what have afterwards turned out very clever works.

All of which is respectfully submitted by
DER FREYSCHUETZ.

Special Notices.

DESCRIPTIVE LIST OF THE LATEST MUSIC, Published by Oliver Ditson & Co.

Vocal, with Piano Accompaniment.

Changed. 4. Eb to e. *Boott*. 35

"Bright as ever flows the sea.
Bright as ever shines the sun;
But alas! they seem to me,
Not the sun that used to be,
Not the tide that used to run."

From "Aftermath." Please remember that there is another song of the same name, by a different composer. It is superfluous to praise Mr. Boott's sweet, classical music.

Greeting Glee. Solo and Chorus. 3. C to e. *Simplician*. 30

"In this dear old hall,
Where haunt us yet
The fragrant mem'ries of the times we met."

For the school or academy, and is a bright and cheery welcoming glee, of which the first four lines may be sung either as solo or duet.

Gliding o'er the Lake. 3. F to g. *Pratt*. 30

"Ah! Love, I would that life,
Our way as smooth would make."
Very good wish, expressed in a most agreeable manner. Neither poetry nor music could very well get along without "lakes," which are generally beautiful enough to suggest all sorts of agreeable thoughts and melodies.

What'er betide. 4. Eb to g. *Millard*. 50

"Tho' many lands and waves divide,
My soul will cling to thine.
As clings the faithful Ivy vine
To yonder ruined shrine."

Magnificent song for soprano voice. Has in it the elements of great popularity.

Why don't my darling Papa come? Song and Chorus. 3. F to d. *Wheeler*. 35

"Why do they make him stay so late?
He knows we're all alone."

Temperance song of the most effective kind.

Instrumental.

Nearer, my God, to Thee. 4. G. *Warner*. 50

A splendid transcription of the well-known melody. Sacred pieces are not always easy to transcribe, as rapid runs, &c., take away from the simple and quiet beauty of the original melody. But this throughout is in good taste, and an appropriate ornamental arrangement of the sweet air.

Strauss Carnival Lancers. 4. *50*

New music for the Lancers must needs be attractive. If made for Carnival time, then it must be merry. But Lancers for Carnival time by Strauss must be very merry and the best of music.

Piggy-back Galop. Picture Title. 2. G. *Mack*. 40

Get the picture title for the babies at home! Sweet little galop for beginners, plainly printed and fingered.

Souvenir de Steinbach. Idylle. 4. G. *Kafka*. 40

Neat, pretty and brilliant. An Idylle so far as it reminds one of a merry peasants dance.

Zaragoza March. Mexican March. 3. Db. *Ortega*. 35

A neat and peculiar march of decided originality. A portion of it is in the key of six flats.

ABBREVIATIONS.—Degrees of difficulty are marked 1 to 7. The *key* is marked with a capital letter: as C, B flat, &c. A small Roman letter marks the highest note, if on the staff, an italic letter the highest note, if above the staff.

MUSIC BY MAIL.—Music is sent by mail, the expense being two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof about one cent for an ordinary piece of music. Persons at a distance will find the conveyance a saving of time and expense in obtaining supplies. Books can also be sent at double these rates.

